

Bell companies operate an "essential facility", and should have to accommodate other ISP firms that wish to purchase access from them. This wholesale provisioning will stimulate competition and be of benefit to the consumers. To not do so would cripple the '96 Telecom Act.

Chairman Powell: Please do not sell out to BIG BUSINESS, at the expense of competition and the small businesses of our country.

The fact that the Baby Bells have been allowed to conduct business in a manner that violates the spirit of the 1996 Telecom Act, if not the law itself, has stymied internet related economic development in both inner-city and rural environments. We need to make it possible to do business as an independent competitive ISP without requiring lawsuits against the Bells to force them to comply with existing law. It should be possible to get into this business without having to hire expensive lawyers. The focus of the internet service providing CLECS should be providing service to their customers (which the ILECS are often unwilling to provide in the first place) instead of having to guard against the Bells reestablishing their monopolies by both legal and illegal means.